Over the last few years, an increasing trend has shown itself in movies. Starting with the movie *Sherlock Holmes* in 2009, the idea of modernizing and adapting famous literary and historical figures has steadily gained popularity. Both Holmes movies are prime examples of the trend, as is the upcoming film *Abraham Lincoln, Vampire Hunter*, for hopefully obvious reasons. The same has been done with The Raven… at least sort of.

The movie revolves around the then-virtually-unknown poet and author Edgar Allan Poe. Baltimore is rocked by a series of gruesome and bizarre killings, which, on closer examination, prove to be literal interpretations of some of Poe’s most gruesome stories, including the ‘Masque of the Red Death’ and ‘The Pit and the Pendulum’. Poe is pulled into the matter by the police to assist in the investigation, but as the killings escalate, things get personal for Poe when the killer starts targeting those closest to him.

Based on the trailer, *The Raven* looked like a sort of odd, historical slasher movie with Edgar Allan Poe thrown in to provide some novelty. However, this proved to be far from the case. Although several sequences do have gruesome killings involved, at its core, it isn’t really a slasher movie at all,

Actually, it’s really a mystery movie with a dash of serial killer thrown in. Poe shows a surprising aptitude for detective work, and through deductive reasoning and police procedure, slowly tracks the killer as the murders slowly escalate. Amusingly enough, it showed more actual detective work than either of the *Sherlock Holmes* movies did.

The movie is surprisingly elegant, considering its somewhat bizarre premise. As Robert Downey Jr. did with Sherlock Holmes, John Cusack plays Poe as a sort of eccentric misfit. Cusack delivers a much more down-to-earth performance, however; you can actually believe that this man existed. He plays Poe, if not historically accurately, then at least realistically

The movie itself is very dark in style and tone. Anyone going searching for a fun adventure ride akin to *Sherlock Holmes* is going to find themselves disappointed, because *The Raven* verges into some very disturbing musings on the human mind and doesn’t let the viewer off the hook easily.

Overall, *The Raven* is interesting. It certainly isn’t a great movie, but it takes the historical action genre that *Sherlock Holmes* helped establish and takes it down some interesting paths.